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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1284  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 3054  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0304

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002658

SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 08/25/2019  
TAGS PGOV, PREL, AF  
SUBJECT: FM BILDT AGREES ON NEXT STEPS IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: KABUL 2636

Classified By: PolCouns Annie Pforzheimer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt agreed, in an August 31 meeting with Ambassador Eikenberry, to a post-election course of action.

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Looking at the Next Five Years  
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2. (C) Looking ahead to the resolution of the presidential election, Ambassador Eikenberry laid out five key steps which we recommend that the United States take -- first, both leading candidates should understand we are paying close attention to their conduct in this interim period before the certification of the election.

3. (C) Minister Bildt assented to all five points, and noted that the conference of foreign ministers could be a key moment in which to emphasize the importance of the election process.

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Setting the Stakes for a Second Administration  
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4. (C) Expressing concern that President Karzai still seems to think that we are here on an expeditionary mission to kill foreign fighters operating in Afghanistan, Ambassador Eikenberry stressed the importance of the election process.

5. (C) A key agenda item for a second Karzai administration could be the reconciliation process. Ambassador Eikenberry questioned Bildt whether there were constitutional constraints in Europe to supporting programs representing an erosion of human rights in Afghanistan, but affirmed that the United States would support such programs.

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Maintaining the Legitimacy of the Elections  
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6. (C) Minister Bildt expressed concerns that the legitimacy of the election was being called into question. He noted that while the conference of foreign ministers was being held, the election process was being delayed.

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Smoothing Relations with the Palace  
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7. (C) Responding to Minister Bildt's statement that both President Karzai and Foreign Minister Spanta had "stern words" that were "not direct," Ambassador Eikenberry noted that the United States would support the election process.